



RTCA in Arkansas

The Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. The National Park Service (NPS) staff provide technical assistance to community groups, city, county, tribal governments, and non-profit organizations working to enhance close-to-home outdoor recreation and natural resource conservation opportunities. We help local leaders plan and design trails and parks; conserve and improve access to natural areas; protect special places; and create recreation opportunities.

The RTCA program in Arkansas offers a wide range of services that can be tailored to meet the needs of an individual project. The NPS staff members are trained facilitators who encourage project leaders to build collaborative partnerships among governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. The program helps communities and groups define their vision, goals, and objectives; analyze issues and opportunities; and develop strategic action plans and time lines for projects. We do not provide financial assistance, but can help project partners identify and secure sources of funding and technical support.

Any community with committed project partners can apply for assistance. Believing the best plans are completed locally, the National Park Service will work with partners to encourage broad-based community participation in planning, designing, and implementing the projects we support.

In 2016, the National Park Service in Arkansas will work on a variety of projects including:

- **Baring Cross Wetland Restoration and Trail** – The project goal is to restore a degraded wetland site, develop an interpretation plan, and connect the site by trail to the Arkansas River Trail and a nearby elementary school. (Location: Little Rock, Arkansas)
- **Holiday Island Trails** – The project goal is to develop an Outreach Strategy Plan and a Master Trails Plan for the community and obtain adoption of the plan by the Suburban Improvement District. (Location: Carroll County, Arkansas)
- **Mississippi River Connections Collaborative/Geotourism** – The project goal is to increase recognition of America's Great River, enhance the existing resources, acquire funding for conservation and development, and ensure that all Americans can enjoy these assets in the future. (Location: Mississippi River, from its headwaters to the Gulf of Mexico)
- **Mountain View Trails** – The project goal is to develop a strategic outreach plan and a master trails plan that will connect schools, shops, cultural attractions within town and build on the existing outdoor recreation and growing mountain biking tourism surrounding Mountain View. (Location: Stone County, Arkansas)



Cyclists racing on the Mountain View Trails. Photo: Stone County Leader

Recent Success Story

Mt. Kessler Outdoor Classroom and Nature Center – Mount Kessler Outdoor Classroom and Nature Center is a collaborative project that consists of an indoor nature center with ecological and conservation-minded exhibits, and an outdoor classroom with a 0.6-mile interpretive hiking trail with learning stations that discuss several environmental concepts. In November 2015, 120 students from four classes spent a half-day field trip as a pilot program. Students spent

part of the trip hiking the trail, where they filled out a checklist to identify parts of the ecosystem. They stopped at a scenic bluff area to practice observation by doing a nature sketch and composing poetry. In the Nature Center, the students learned about plant/animal adaptations through a dress up activity, where students dressed up as a flower or a bee. They also learned about erosion by demonstrating the effects of ground cover and root systems on erosion. Feedback from teachers was very positive, and more field trips are scheduled.

For more information about the RTCA program refer to: www.nps.gov/rtca, or for information about ongoing or potential RTCA projects in Arkansas contact:

Guy Headland
guy_headland@nps.gov
(479) 443-1996



FIND YOUR
PARK